



Manus x Machina: Fashion in an Age of Technology

Andrew Bolton

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The complex and often ambiguous relationship between the hand crafted and the machine made is examined in this intriguing look at the ever-changing world of fashion and taste. *Manus x Machina* traces styles of dress from one-of-a-kind works and haute couture created by highly skilled artisans, through the introduction of industrial manufacturing, to extraordinary recent technological advancements applied to high fashion, such as 3D printing, laser cutting, and computer-generated weaving and patterns. The oppositional relationship between the machine, as representative of democracy and mass production, and the hand, as the hallmark of elitism, is explored in its many facets in this fascinating book.

Paradoxically, technology in fashion has both advanced artistic creation and obscured the sense of the designer's expert hand. Similarly, handmade garments have come to represent either a nostalgia for lost craftsmanship or, in haute couture, a cult of personality and affluence. Interviews with renowned and cutting-edge designers such as Sarah Burton, Karl Lagerfeld, and Miuccia Prada discuss how technology can blur the line between haute couture and prêt-à-porter, and ultimately question the relevance of the distinction between hand and machine.

A tour de force in art book production, *Manus x Machina* incorporates two volumes into its innovative package. The main volume of the book includes a smaller hand-sewn booklet, which features the printed interviews, tucked into the back jacket flap. The outer cover of the main volume is made of three-ply plastic layers with high-frequency weld and die-cut flaps. The paperback cover is die cut (modelled on the punch cards used in the first automated weaving looms), and the main volume includes 5 different paper stocks and silver foil stamping, and is printed with both high-density and ultraviolet inks. The book also features new photography of extraordinary pieces, including intricate 19th-century floral designs by William Morris, handcrafted haute couture of designers such as Christian Dior and Alexander McQueen, and the spectacular 3D creations of Iris van Herpen.

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